

we get the last total in 4 years, the largest number of people ever to move off the welfare rolls. And we have more to do. But that's something to be proud of. The crime rate going down every year, that's something to be proud of.

We have reasserted the importance of the family in our social policy, with the family and medical leave law, with special tax breaks for families with modest incomes, by raising the minimum wage, by passing the V-chip legislation and taking on some of these other very tough issues. I think it's very important. That's the kind of pro-family policy that Senator Dorgan has fought for.

We have fought for free and for fair trade for America. We're the number one exporter in the world again. We had record exports for the last 4 years. We've reasserted the leadership role of our country in reducing the nuclear threat and taking advantage of the opportunities that are out there.

Now, we've got a lot left to do. We still have to balance the budget. People tell me all the time, "Well, can we keep this recovery going?" The answer is, we can if we do the right things but only if we do the right things. The American people are more than doing their part. They're willing to keep working. They're willing to keep starting small businesses, keep expanding businesses. They're dying to improve their education and skills and to become more productive. We have to create the conditions and give people

the tools to make the most of their own lives. If we do it, we'll keep going forward.

That's what is at stake when Byron Dorgan presents himself to the people of North Dakota again. And no one should forget that on the major policy questions of the last 4 years, no matter how controversial, no matter how tight, no matter how tough, he stood up and cast the right vote. And this is a better, stronger country, and his State is better and stronger because of it. And he deserves to be rewarded for the leadership he's exercised and, most important, for the potential he has in the future for balancing the budget, for putting education first among our priorities, for doing the right thing to finish the work of welfare reform, for dealing with the problems that rural States have that are so easy to overlook here in Washington unless you have the kind of strong, clear voice that he has exhibited.

So you're doing a good thing being here for him tonight. And I'm glad to be here with him. I am honored to be his friend, honored to work with him every day. And I trust that I will have the chance to do that until I am term-limited out and he goes on to his just reward. *[Laughter]*

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7 p.m. in the John Hay Room at the Hay-Adams Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Dorgan's wife, Kim.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner *March 11, 1997*

Thank you. Please sit down. Thank you. First of all, I want to thank Roy Romer for his willingness to go back and forth across America, from here to Colorado and back several times every week to try to help us do what all of us need to do with our party. I thank in his absence Steve Grossman. We're all thinking about him and Barbara. Nothing hurts worse than cracking your elbow, I don't think, and we've got to be thinking about them. And I thank Alan Solomont for his work. And I thank all of you for your support.

I have just come from an event for Senator Byron Dorgan of North Dakota. It was a fas-

cinating event. You know, North Dakota is a State that's so small, I felt like a sophisticate from Arkansas being there. *[Laughter]* And it's one of the few delegations that's completely Democratic, even though the State always votes Republican in Presidential elections. They have two Democratic Senators and a Democratic Congressman.

And the first time Byron Dorgan ran for Congress was in 1974, the first year I ran for public office. And Senator Conrad was his campaign manager, and Congressman Pomeroy was his driver. And I told him that it took all three of them to lose that race, and I lost mine all

by myself. [Laughter] But it was a very interesting and heartening event, because I was thinking about Byron Dorgan and Kent and Earl, and I was thinking that if any of those three had either not been there or had not been willing to put their necks on the line, we would not have passed the budget in 1993. And we would have not reversed trickle-down economics, or in a less pejorative term, we would not have reversed supply-side economics.

And because we did, in an economic plan that invested in our children and our technology, in a fairer tax system for working people, 4½ years later—or 4 years later, we've got 11½ million jobs, the first time any administration, period, had produced that much; 63 percent decline in the deficit; lowest rates of unemployment and inflation combined since the 1960's. That's what this party is about, and don't ever forget that. That's one big thing.

I'll tell you a little thing. Today I got a letter from a woman that I know from Iowa. I met her in Cedar Rapids in 1992. She was offering to defend me from the attacks that we're only interested in people like you. And she reminded me of this story of how I met her. I met her in a rally in 1992, and she was holding a child of another race in her hands. I said, "Where did you get that baby?" She said, "This baby is my baby." I said, "Well, where did you get it?" She said, "In Miami." I said, "Where in the world—how did you get a baby from Miami? You're from Iowa." She said, "Well, nobody else wanted this baby. This baby has got AIDS."

And later in the campaign, my staff actually went out of their way to try to help this lady in a difficult situation. She adopted a child when she had been left by her husband. She was raising two children on her own, her own children. She had barely enough money to put body and soul together. And she was at a political rally because she thought it was important for her future. And she has struggled to keep that little baby alive for 4 years. And that child is coming up to the National Institute of Health now, because a lot of the things that are now keeping adults with AIDS alive for very long periods of time, they're not quite sure how to do that with children.

So she wrote me a letter because, she said, "You've always welcomed us. You've always tried to help us, and we'd like to come by and see you." And I love this little kid, and I've kept up with her all these years. And I thought to

myself, that is also what this administration and what this party is about, giving people like that little girl a chance to live the fullest life she can, recognizing the dignity of people like that woman who took what only—you could characterize as a truly heroic stand to do something most of us in far more comfortable circumstances have never done. And all those things in the middle, that is really what this is all about. And we can never forget that what we do affects real people in real lives.

So when we replaced trickle-down economics with invest-and-grow economics, we gave Americans a chance to have a better future.

When we got away from hot rhetoric and got down to concrete action on social problems and we reversed the social decline, working with people all over America to get the crime rate down and the biggest drop in welfare rolls in history, we helped to give people a better future.

When we restored family, not just in rhetoric but in fact, at the center of our social concerns, with things like the Family and Medical Leave Act and the V-chip and the television ratings and the regulations to protect children from tobacco and the earned-income tax credit, those things changed people's lives.

When we reaffirmed the leadership of the United States for peace and freedom in the world and reduced the nuclear threat, that makes our future better. That's what I'm going to try to do when I go to meet with President Yeltsin next week in Helsinki. What can we keep doing to reduce the nuclear threat? What can we do to build a Europe that's united and free, so in the 21st century we don't have the hundreds of thousands, indeed, the millions of young Americans going over to Europe and risking losing their lives, as happened in World War I and World War II. This is about big things. And I want you to think about that.

And Roy talks about 1995 and '96—we had—I found that experience sometimes exhausting but ultimately exhilarating, because we were fighting about real things, and the American people had to make a decision, huge, big differences in how we should move into the future, what is the role of Government in our lives. And I think the election pretty much resolved that.

And we decided we would no longer try to have our daily bread by demonizing our Government in a democratic, free society. I can say

that this administration has done more to reduce the size of Government and the number of regulations and the burden of it than our Republican predecessors, but we never could figure out how to use the rhetoric to convince the American people that the Government that they elected and paid for was their enemy inherently. And I think what we see now is that people want it to work better, and they want it to be effective.

Today I had the privilege of appearing with Walter Cronkite and Paul Taylor, who spearheaded the coalition last year to try to get the networks to give free television time to the candidates for President as the opening salvo of what they hope will be a broad campaign finance reform effort that will actually open up the airwaves to all qualified candidates. And I said to them that I felt very strongly that now that we were switching from—we were switching to digital channeling, which will give the networks far more options to communicate with people, that we ought to require as a part of the public interest more free TV time. And at least one executive, Barry Diller, has challenged his colleagues to do that. And it sounds like a lot of money—let's say we just equal what is about spent on television that's funded now, about \$55 million in the off-years; let's say \$400 million in election years; that's still less than 2 percent of the total revenues of these operations.

And when you get a monopoly on the airwaves, I think you ought to act in the public interest. All of us know that we cannot—those of us who've followed the campaign laws—under the decisions of the Supreme Court, the only way we can ever control the aggregate spending in political campaigns is to offer something to those who voluntarily observe the limits. And the only thing that's worth it is access to the voters in a free and unfettered way, principally through television. So we were talking about that today. That's something that's important to do.

There are a lot of other things that we have to do here. We've got to balance the budget. We've got to pass the education reform proposals that I have recommended, both to raise standards and to open college. We've got to take more seriously this juvenile justice issue. Even with the crime rates dropping dramatically, juvenile crime rates are too high almost every-

where. But we know we can do something about it.

I was in Boston the other day; I spent a day in Boston. There has not been a single child killed in Boston in a year and a half, not one, zero, because—and it is not an accident—because of all the things that they have done there that we have now put into a bill and tried to give the tools to the rest of the country to do, which is exactly what we did with the crime bill.

So we have all these things out there to do, and that's what you're fighting for. But I want you to be proud of the fact that this country is in much better shape than it was 4 years ago because of specific changes that were made as a direct result of the efforts made not only by the President and the Vice President but by the people who supported us in the Congress and throughout the country. This country is better because of that, and I thank you for that.

And I ask you for your support for all the things we're trying to do now. Stay with us. We have so much more to do. As I said, this is not a time, just because things are going well, that the country can afford to relax. We have to finish the job of balancing the budget, if you want the economy to continue to grow. We have to finish the job of raising educational standards and opening opportunity, if you want everybody to participate in economic growth. And ultimately, our economic growth will be retarded unless we dramatically improve the education of our people. Because of the job mix, the good new jobs we're creating, virtually all of them now require something more than high school.

If you expect everybody to be treated fairly in this society, we have got to find a way to give jobs to those people on welfare. We've told them they've got to go to work. Who are we to say that unless they have work that they can go to every day?

So there's a lot out there. Let me say again, I am proud of what Governor Romer and Steve Grossman have done in putting the Democratic Party foursquare on the side of passing campaign finance reform this year. And I hope that some of the decisions that are being taken now in the Senate will help us to do that.

But I want all the Democrats to stay out there for that. We need to be on the side of positive change. We have rescued—I believe we

have rescued the debate from a sterile, meaningless debate over whether Government is the problem or Government is the savior. We know it is neither now. What we now have to do is to create a Government for the 21st century that will command the support of the American people and do the job that needs to be done to give people the tools to make the most of their own lives.

That's what we're going to do for 4 more years, thanks to you. And I want you to be happy about it, proud of it, and determined to continue to do it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:35 p.m. at the Sheraton Carlton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Democratic National Committee officials Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, general chair, Steve Grossman, national chair, and his wife, Barbara, and Alan Solomont, national finance chair; President Boris Yeltsin of Russia; and Walter Cronkite, chair, and Paul Taylor, executive director, Free TV for Straight Talk Coalition.

Remarks Announcing Proposed National Transportation Efficiency Legislation

March 12, 1997

Thank you very much. Secretary Slater, Mr. Vice President, members of the administration, the Department of Transportation. Senator Moynihan, thank you for being here. Mayor Schwartz, thank you for being here.

I spent a lot of time in the last few years talking about the need to build a bridge to the 21st century. And usually I'm talking in metaphorical terms that involve—[laughter]—balancing the budget, improving education for our children, preserving the environment as we grow the economy. Today we're talking about building bridges and roads and transit systems and highways in more literal terms. But I think it's important also to point out that as we invest in these bridges and roads and transit systems, we are also building a bridge to a cleaner environment. We're building a bridge from welfare to work. We're building a bridge to sustainable communities that can last and grow and bring people together over the long run. And that is the importance of the legislation that we submit to Congress today. It does the old-fashioned work of investing in America's infrastructure in a very important way, but it also ties those investments to the challenges we face today and tomorrow.

I am proud that even as we have moved toward a balanced budget and cut our deficit by 63 percent in the last 4 years, we have still increased our Federal investment in transportation infrastructure, and I thank the Members

of Congress who have supported that. [Applause] I feel compelled to disclose that I did not plant the person in the middle of the audience over here who started the applause. [Laughter] But if he's a Federal employee, he will immediately get a raise. [Laughter]

Compared to 4 years ago, our highways and bridges are stronger, 100 miles of new transit lines are under construction, and that is just part of the story. But it is a big part of why our economy has produced almost 12 million jobs in the last 4 years and one month, including over one million new jobs in construction.

Today we're taking the next big step to maintain and modernize our transportation system and to make sure it is the best in the world. The "National Economic Crossroads Transportation Efficiency Act," as Secretary Slater said, known as NEXTEA, authorizes \$174 billion over the next 6 years to improve our bridges, highways, and transit systems. It will create tens of thousands of jobs for our people, help move people from welfare to work, protect our air and water, and improve our highway safety.

I'm especially proud that as we build our infrastructure, we are going to help build better lives for people who are moving off welfare. One of the biggest barriers facing people who move from welfare to work is finding transportation to get to their jobs, their training programs, their children's day care center.